

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

**401 North Washington Street, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

MEETING MINUTES

February 23, 2005

7:00 p.m.

ATTENDING

Patricia E. Cornish
Holly Fechner
Jodi Finkelstein
Jodi Grant
Carol Lynn Green
Shirley L. Johnson
Resa Levy
Regina Oldak
Tedi S. Osias
Gary P. Smith
Yun Jung Yang

STAFF

Paula S. Rodgers
Claudia Lujan, Graduate Student Intern
Judith Vaughan-Prather

GUEST

Barbara Heyman, Maryland CFW

ABSENT

Deborah L. Horan
Shelia Parker

I. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA/APPROVAL OF MINUTES...Oldak

Second Vice President Oldak called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. President Cornish was making a presentation to the Board of Education on Women's History Month and arrived at 8:12 p.m. Commissioner Horan is sick this evening and Commissioner Parker is out of town on business. The order of the CFW agenda items was revised to accommodate President Cornish's late arrival.

Vice President Oldak asked for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather explained that a revised agenda was distributed to commissioners tonight because there were new items to report under the "Staff Report," "Executive Committee Report," "Unfinished Business," and "New Business." Upon the motion of Commissioner Johnson, duly seconded by Commissioner Grant, the revised agenda was approved. Commissioner Green noted one change to the Minutes of January 26, 2005. On page 3, section III.A, she said that it was Commissioner Johnson, not she, who reported on the Predatory Lending public hearing.

Upon the motion of Commissioner Green, duly seconded by Commissioner Johnson and unanimously passed, the Minutes of January 26, 2005 were approved as amended.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Policy and Legislation (PAL)Osias / Finkelstein

1. Women's Legislative Briefing

In Commissioner Parker's absence, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather reported on the January 30 Women's Legislative Briefing (WLB). The Briefing was a big success despite the small attendance. Over 650 people pre-registered for the event; however the inclement weather that morning precluded many from attending and resulted in approximately 200 in attendance. Cokie Roberts gave an excellent keynote address, the workshops were informative, and the conference evaluations were positive.

Regrettably, CFW just learned that Bunny LaCour, a long-time member of the WLB Planning Committee, passed away suddenly on February 22. Ms. LaCour was instrumental in developing the Power Point presentation that displays behind the guest speakers at the WLB opening ceremony.

2. State Legislation

(a) M-LAW – On February 10, the hearing on SB 257, the top priority of M-LAW (Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women) which would revise the structure of the Maryland Commission for Women, was held in Annapolis. Two 6-member panels presented testimony; one in support of the legislation and one in opposition. Commissioner Oldak and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather testified in support of the legislation which proposes to change the Maryland CFW composition from 24 members to 25; allows the Commission to elect its own Chair, and establishes the executive director position as a merit position. The bill has 33 co-sponsors and there are 47 senators. The bill has now passed the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee, but was on hold because other senators want amendments to the bill. **(Staff Note: On February 28, SB 257 passed the Senate by a vote of 32 to 13).**

(b) Equal Pay Commission – As far as we know, no steps have been taken to begin filling the slots on the newly established commission. (*See Item V.C for further discussion of this issue*).

(c) Emergency Contraception Bill – Scheduled to be heard on March 8 and 9. Written testimony should be sent, unless CFW is asked to be there in person. The CFW will depend on Senator Sharon Grosfeld's advice on this.

(d) No Means No Legislation – Scheduled to be heard on March 16 and 22.

(e) Domestic Violence Bill (re: address confidentiality) - Heard on February 17. No further CFW action is needed right now.

3. Local Legislation

(a) Predatory Lending – Commissioner Johnson reported on the press conference called by County Councilmember Tom Perez on February 10. Following the press conference, the County’s Health and Human Services committee also held a worksession on the legislation and although no vote was taken, it was agreed that further work is needed. Ms. Johnson said that testimony was presented by 6 victims of predatory lending practices. Everyone agreed that more public education is needed and some think that state law is required. Commissioner Johnson said that Odessa Shannon, Director of the County’s Office of Human Rights reported receiving no complaints regarding predatory lending.

Commissioner Osias said that the Council expects that at least two additional worksession are needed. If it’s a banking and lending issue, the issue is covered by state law; if it’s a human rights issue, it can be addressed by county law. Banks and businesses are pressing it as a lending and banking issue.

The Office of Human Rights (OHR) will hold a public forum on the issue on May 18. OHR wants to invite all the entities covered in Sec. 27 of the County Code to co-sponsor this forum. Commissioner Green suggested that perhaps a public education component should be developed. Commissioner Johnson said that most people seem to agree that the Office of Consumer Affairs should be the focus for the public education efforts.

4. Federal Legislative PrioritiesGrant

Commissioner Grant reported that federal budget cuts are threatening programs that benefit women and families. She reported on the following priorities:

(a) Paid Family Leave – Senators Ted Kennedy and Rosa DeLauro are sponsoring the bill which will be introduced soon, and it is receiving a lot of positive press. Fifty-nine million U.S. workers have no paid sick leave; 86% of food and restaurant workers have no paid sick leave and no job protection; 86 million U.S. workers have no sick leave to care for dependents.

(b) Social Security – Social Security “reform” is a huge women’s issue. Most female advocates oppose privatizing Social Security because females are most often beneficiaries of progressive benefits and females live longer than men but have less money to put aside. None of the proposals address the “problems” alleged with the Social Security system.

At this portion of the meeting, Commissioner Smith called for a point of order. He expressed concern about the length of time the Policy and Legislative Committee was taking to make its report. He said that the PAL Committee Report involved a great deal of discussion among the PAL committee rather than reporting issues and recommendations that have developed since the last CFW meeting. Mr. Smith said that this concern was discussed by the Executive Committee at its February meeting.

B. Technology and Girls (TAG)Smith

On February 14, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather, staff member Tracy Stuger, and Commissioner Smith met with Steve Cain, Dean of Community Education at Montgomery College and Sandi Harris, Director of Youth Programs at Montgomery College, to discuss the following issues: summer computer camp tuition, a collaborative effort between the college and Montgomery County Public Schools to study the effect of the camps, ideas for a financial plan where CFW might contract with the college and pay them a flat fee to run the camps, computer camp curriculum, size of the Takoma Park camp classroom, and publicity. The college did accept responsibility for funding the curriculum update.

The committee is putting together plans to set up a computer lab in the CFW Emily Edmonson room. Plans are also underway to publicize the 2005 summer computer camp sessions. TAG's next meeting is on March 2 at 5:30 p.m.

C. Immigrant Women in Montgomery County (IWin)Yang

Commissioner Yang reported that the IWin Committee met earlier in the evening to revise the time line for publishing the "Employment Rights of Pregnant Workers" brochure and the "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" in English. The committee originally hoped for a campaign kick-off on International Women's Day on March 8, however, the design has taken much longer than anticipated. The committee now hopes to have the brochures published, at least in English, Spanish and Korean, before Intern Claudia Lujan leaves at the end of April.

On February 18, CFW sent a letter to Vice President of the County Council George Leventhal regarding the domestic workers bill of rights, and suggesting the need for a study of the experience of domestic workers in the county to document the issues raised, and the size and scope of the problem.

On February 10, Legislative and Budget Specialist Tracy Stuger represented the CFW at a County Council hearing on human trafficking and she sent the following report:

The presenters gave compelling testimony about the need for a county-wide response to the problems of trafficking in Montgomery County. Two victims (one from Cameroon, the other from Tanzania) spoke about their specific situations. Although the woman from Cameroon currently lives in Montgomery County, her abuse occurred in New Jersey. The woman from

Tanzania worked in Gaithersburg. Both were in situations in which sponsors brought them from their native country and forced them into domestic servitude with no (or very little) wage. CASA de MD spoke of different approaches that the County can take to respond effectively. MIRECS also spoke on this as well. Assistant Police Chief Dee Walker then followed up with some steps that the police department is taking including Chief Manger's special focus on Human Trafficking.

Among the responses that they suggested were (list not exhaustive):

- providing basic human rights information for victims (in various languages)
- training police officers/service providers to respond to this growing population
- looking into ways to assist victims with housing, transportation, etc.
- collecting data on this issue
- create a task force

The next IWin committee meeting will be on March 9 at 5:00 p.m.

III. STAFF REPORTVaughan-Prather

A. Staffing and Budget

Staff has prepared the required paperwork for the new part-time Community Outreach/Volunteer Coordination position that will be shared between the Executive Director's office and the Counseling and Career Center. However, departments were notified by the Chief Administrative Office that the departmental budget can not be over-spent this fiscal year. As a result, the position will not be filled until July 1st. There is some concern about not filling a position by the end of a fiscal year in which a position has been approved in; however the CAO has promised to "protect" the position. The department will have to be extremely cautious with its operating expenses.

(President Cornish arrived at 8:12 pm and took over as Chair of the meeting.)

B. Annual Report

Copies of the FY 04 Annual Report were distributed to commissioners. Staff has worked to convert the annual report, which typically takes 61 pages, into a 16-page, more attractive and concise report. The cover and layout was designed by Administrative Specialist Paula Rodgers.

President Cornish recommended that copies of the Annual Report be sent to CFW's top contributors who are listed on the Donations page.

C. Counseling Center's Business Women's Program

The CFW Counseling and Career Center designed a series of workshops this quarter to help women who are interested in either becoming business owners or developing

an existing business. President Cornish spoke at the January 7th CFW workshop attended by 50 people, "The Road to Entrepreneurship for Women." During this quarter, a number of workshops are being offered by the Counseling Center and it proudly reported that 23 women attended the February 4th workshop "Women Entrepreneurs: Doing Business with Montgomery County," and on February 22, twenty-six women attended "Small or Home-Based Businesses: Strategies for Success." Other workshops in this series are being held throughout the month of March.

D. Montgomery's Best Honor Awards

Invited Commissioners are reminded to respond to the invitation for the March 11, 2005 Montgomery's Best Honor Awards ceremony. This year, a National Association of Counties Achievement Award is being presented to the IWin Committee for its program, "A Brave New World: Opportunities and Challenges for Immigrant Women." February 28, 2005 is the deadline for RSVPs.

IV. LIAISON REPORTS

A. Women's Fair

Commissioner Levy is working with the 2005 Women's Fair Committee, helping to raise funds. The committee is planning a great program at the new Montgomery County Conference Center. The Fair takes place on Saturday, April 16. Commissioners and employees will be helping to staff the CFW/CCC information booth.

V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Frederick County CFW

On January 28, President Cornish and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with the Frederick County Commission for Women and discussed issues such as the criteria for the selection of new commissioners and the process for setting the Commission priorities and procedures. The group was very interested in hearing about Montgomery County CFW's projects and asked for a follow up meeting in the future.

B. Website Update

The Chairs of the Policy and Legislative Committee and the Immigrant Women in Montgomery County Committee were reminded to submit information for updating the CFW website. Updated information has already been received from the Technology and Girls Committee. All Commissioners are asked to check their own biographical postings and advise staff of any changes.

C. Pay Equity Commission

President Cornish reported that she was asked by Delegate Jean Cryor to recommend some possible candidates for the Pay Equity Commission. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather suggested former commissioner Wendy Kahn, who chaired the CFW 1982-1989 Pay Equity Project. It was the consensus of the CFW that Ms. Kahn, if willing, will be nominated. Other names suggested by commissioners included Tracy Brown of the Women's Law Center of Maryland and Vickie Lovell of the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Commissioner Fechner said that it would be good idea to recommend women educators and economists and she suggested the name of Chris Owen. Commissioners were asked to email President Cornish additional names for recommendation.

D. Training for Members of Boards/Commissions/Committees

The Office of the County Attorney is again offering training on Ethics and the Open Meetings Act for members and staff of boards, commissions and committees (b/c/c). The training is mandatory. The next available dates for FY 2005 are March 15 and June 20 and all training sessions are held at the Executive Office Building. Registration is required and commissioners should RSVP at 240-777-2529.

E. Presidents' Advisory Council Meetings

Some ideas were discussed for the next President's Advisory Council meeting. If commissioners want to schedule a meeting in March, staff can plan one for March 21 at the New Fortune Restaurant. (*See Item VII.A for additional discussion on this topic*)

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. School Girls Unite Event

School Girls Unite, the non-profit youth activism project developed by Montgomery County Public School 8th grade girls held the *Women: Back to the Future! Event* on February 6 and it was a huge success. The organizers reported to Executive Director Vaughan-Prather that 300 people attended the program and \$5,500 was raised to help improve opportunities for education for girls in the African nation of Mali. The group attributes the success of the program in part to CFW's co-sponsorship and help in publicizing the event. School Girls United was also written up in *Time for Kids Magazine*.

B. Nebraska Commission for Women

At the CFW meeting held January 23, commissioners learned about the Nebraska Commission for Women's efforts to stay active by raising private donations. One of the fundraising efforts the director of the Nebraska CFW developed was to sell a lapel pin depicting a female version of the Sower statue that stands on top of the

Nebraska Capitol Building. Thirteen Montgomery County Commissioners and staff decided to each purchase a pin. Graduate Student Intern Claudia Lujan distributed the pins to those commissioners who contributed \$10 to help out the Nebraska CFW.

C. CERB Report

The Committee Evaluation and Review Board (CERB) has issued its report and recommendations, and a public hearing before the County Council is scheduled for March 8. The main concern that CFW has with the proposed legislation resulting from the CERB report is the proposal for a 5-year sunset provision for every board, committee and commission in county government. A letter was sent by the CFW to the Chair of the CERB Committee opposing this recommendation; however, legislation has been drafted to that effect.

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will find out what the County Executive's position is on the proposed legislation.

It will also be important that other boards, commissions and committees testify at the March 8 hearing on the proposed legislation. Commissioner Grant suggested that CFW form a small group to study this issue and to work on the testimony. Commissioners Osias, Oldak, Green, and President Cornish will serve on the study group.

Commissioner Oldak will call Councilmember Nancy Floreen regarding the County Council's position. President Cornish will present CFW's testimony at the March 8 hearing. Commissioner Osias asked what impact the sunset provision would have on the Counseling and Career Center, and she said that it would be important to point out to the Council that the Counseling and Career Center is an operating entity of the Commission for Women.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Hosting focus group of local CFW's for Women's Heritage Center

Linda Shevitz, Education Equity Coordinator for the Maryland State Department of Education asked CFW to host a focus group of local commissions for women to gather their input on the Women's Heritage Center. The Commission agreed that Montgomery County CFW could send out the invitations and hold the event at the CFW office as long as it is held during the week. MSDE would have to fund any other expenses. Ms. Vaughan-Prather said that if MSDE wants to hold the focus group during March, it could take the place of the President's Council meeting, and she will find out additional information from Ms. Shevitz.

B. BPW Women's Events

Commissioners discussed BPW's request that CFW co-sponsor or partner with BPW on two upcoming women's events: Women: Back to the Future on March 15 and the 6th Annual Health Empowerment Forum for Women on April 22. CFW frequently

receives requests from outside organizations to co-sponsor events and to help publicize other events by sending out email announcements. In September 2004, the Commission adopted a policy that CFW will only send out announcements for other CFWs and the NACW; for groups that CFW sponsors; for events which CFW provides speakers; and for events which CFW participates on a planning committee. However, requests for CFW co-sponsorship are increasing, as groups come to understand that the CFW can help publicize their events only if it is a sponsor.

Discussion was held about the need for a policy on co-sponsorship of outside events. Upon the motion made by Commissioner Oldak, duly seconded by Commissioner Smith, the following policy on co-sponsorship of outside events was unanimously adopted:

Policy Re: Co-sponsorship of Outside Events

The Montgomery County Commission for Women will only publicize those events for which it is a co-sponsor. Co-sponsorship is decided by a majority vote of the Commission for Women.

Commissioner Oldak moved that CFW co-sponsor the “Women: Back to the Future” program on March 15 and the “6th Annual Health Empowerment Forum for Women” on April 22. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant and passed unanimously.

C. Women’s History Month Activities

The CFW Counseling and Career Center developed an exhibit featuring the 30 Montgomery County women honored on the CFW Women’s History Quilt, and also a pictorial history of the CFW/CCC. The exhibit will be on display during the month of March at the Rockville Public Library.

In addition to President Cornish’s presentation on Women’s History to the Board of Education this evening, other activities for Women’s History Month include: the possibility of holding a March President’s Council meeting as a women’s heritage event, and articles on women’s history published in the CFW March Newsletter.

D. MCPS Health Education Curriculum

Commissioner Osias (reporting for Commissioner Horan), asked the Commission to write a letter to the Montgomery County School Board in support of the current health education curriculum. In November 2004, the MCPS Board voted to revise the health education curricula to include issues of sexual orientation beginning in the 8th grade and a condom demonstration video in the 10th grade. This has been criticized by abstinence-only proponents. NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland asked that letters of support be sent to the school board president. Commissioner Osias moved that CFW send a letter commending the efforts of the Board of Education; the

motion was seconded by Commissioner Oldak. Commissioner Osias said that Commissioner Horan would draft the letter.

- E. Policy for E-mail Distribution Lists Usage - Discussion of this topic was covered under New Business Item VII. B.

- F. Domestic Homicide

A recent *Washington Post* article discussed the Centers for Disease Control report about the increasing number of homicides against pregnant women. According to the Post article, most police departments do not keep statistics on this crime. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather wrote to the Director of the Montgomery County Abused Persons Program and asked for the statistics on this type of crime in Montgomery County.

- G. 25th Anniversaries: Women Business Owners/Women's Fair/Women's Legislative Briefing

The Women Business Owners of Montgomery County, the Women's Fair and the Women's Legislative Briefing all celebrate Silver Anniversaries in 2005. Gayley Knight, President of WBO is interested in partnering with the organizers of the Women's Fair and the Women's Legislative Briefing to celebrate their 25th anniversaries. WBO is raising funds and planning to honor 25 outstanding Montgomery County women at the WBO annual luncheon in October. One the 25 women will be chosen to receive the ATHENA Award.

A copy of a draft letter Ms. Knight wants to send to county businesses and organizations to raise funds was provided in the CFW meeting packet for discussion by commissioners. Upon the motion made by Commissioner Levy; duly seconded by Commissioner Grant, CFW agreed to co-sponsor the WBO Silver Anniversary event, and approval was given to Executive Director Vaughan-Prather to revise the draft letter.

- J. Commissioner Attendance - Discussion of this item was deferred to the March 23 CFW meeting.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Information about the following events was provided in the CFW Meeting packets:

- A. Women Legislators 2nd Annual Women's Classic, featuring Guest Speaker Candy Crowley, Political Correspondent for CNN on March 7, 2005 at 12 noon, Loews Annapolis Hotel.
- B. Women in Business Conference and Tradeshow (CFW is a co-sponsor) on Friday, March 11, 2005 at the Montgomery County Conference Center.

- C. Maryland Women's Hall of Fame – Induction Ceremony and Reception on March 2, 2005, 5:30 to 9 pm.
- D. Power Networking Breakfast on April 12, 2005 at 9:33 p.m. Information will be forthcoming.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission for Women, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

CFW Action and Follow-up Items

- ☐ 1. CFW will wait to hear Senator Sharon Grosfeld's advice on whether CFW should testify or send written testimony for the March 8th and 9th Emergency Contraception Bill hearing.
- ☐ 2. The No Means No legislation will be heard on March 16th and March 22nd.
- ☐ 3. Staff to send copies of the FY 04 Annual Report to CFW's top contributors who are listed on the Donations page.
- ☐ 4. Invited commissioners are reminded to respond to the invitation by February 28 for the March 11, 2005 Montgomery's Best Honor Awards ceremony.
- ☐ 5. The Chairs of the Policy and Legislative Committee and the Immigrant Women in Montgomery County Committee were reminded to submit information for updating the CFW website. Updated information has already been received from the Technology and Girls Committee. All Commissioners are asked to check their own biographical postings and advise staff of any changes.
- ☐ 6. Commissioners were asked to email President Cornish additional names for recommendation to the State Equity Pay Commission.
- ☐ 7. The Office of the County Attorney is again offering training on Ethics and the Open Meetings Act for members and staff of boards, commissions and committees (b/c/c). The training is mandatory. The next available dates for FY 2005 are March 15 and June 20 and all training sessions are held at the Executive Office Building. Registration is required and commissioners should RSVP at 240-777-2529.
- ☐ 8. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will find out what the County Executive's position is on the proposed CERB legislation. Commissioner Oldak will call Councilmember Nancy Floreen regarding the County Council's position. Commissioners Osias, Oldak, Green and President Cornish will serve on a small

CFW group to study the issue of sunseting certain boards/commissions/committees and work on testimony for the March 8 hearing. President Cornish will testify.

- ☐ 9. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will contact Linda Shevitz of the MSDE about CFW hosting a focus group on the Women's Heritage Center during March.
- ☐ 10. Commissioner Horan to draft a letter from CFW to the Montgomery County School Board supporting their current health education curriculum.
- ☐ 11. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather to revise WBO's draft letter regarding the joint organizations' Silver Anniversary celebration.
- ☒ 12. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather to email information to commissioners about the April 12, 2005 Power Network Breakfast.
- ☒ 13. Discussion re Commissioner Attendance was deferred to the March 23 Commission meeting.

Minutes Submitted By
Paula S. Rodgers
Montgomery County Commission for Women